

Remarks

Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Status

Claims 1 through 14 and 25 through 33 are pending in the present application, with Claims 1, 8, and 26 being independent.

Claim 24 has been cancelled. Claims 1, 2, 8, and 9 have been amended. Claims 26 through 33 are newly presented. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

Specification Objection and Amendments

An amendment to the paragraph beginning at page 36, line 13 of the specification is said to be in improper form. The present amendment to this paragraph has been submitted in accordance with the Revised format, as permitted by the February 25, 2003 OG Notice.

The specification has been objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for certain claimed subject matter. In response, the following amendments have been made to the specification: instances of “kinetic frictional deviation factor” have been amended to read --kinetic frictional deviation coefficient--; and instances of “intermediate image-transfer member” or “intermediate image-transfer medium” have been amended to read --intermediate image-transfer element--. Minor typographical errors identified in the specification also have been corrected. (Additionally, the Abstract has been amended to

read --intermediate image-transfer element-- where appropriate.) It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been presented.

Applicants submit that the specification, as amended, provides proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the specification are respectfully requested.

Claim Objections

Claims 15 and 16 were objected to as being misnumbered, and were renumbered by the Examiner as Claims 24 and 25. See footnote at page 25 of this paper. The present amendment maintains this renumbering.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1 through 14, 24, and 25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. The Examiner notes that certain previously-amended claims recite that the photosensitive member and the intermediate image-transfer element (Claim 1) and the plurality of photosensitive members and the recording sheet (Claim 8) are brought into contact at a contact “line” rather than at a contact “face,” as previously recited. Independent Claims 1 and 8 have been amended to recite that contact takes place a --contact nip--. Support for the expression --contact nip-- may be found at least at page 5, lines 8 through 12 of the specification.

The Examiner further notes that dependent Claim 24 specifies that the cylindrical intermediate image-transfer element recited in Claim 1 is a belt. Claim 24 is said to contain new matter on the basis that a cylindrical shaped belt is without basis in the specification without conceding the propriety of such assertion. Without conceding the propriety of such an assertion, Claim 24 has been cancelled, making the rejection thereof

moot. Newly-presented independent Claim 26 recites an --intermediate image-transfer element-- instead of a cylindrical intermediate image-transfer element. Newly-presented dependent Claim 27, which depends from Claim 26, defines the intermediate image-transfer element recited in Claim 26 as comprising a belt. Support for Claims 26 and 27 may be found, for example, at page 70, lines 11-13 of the specification.

Applicants submit that the amended claims are in full compliance with the requirements of Section 112. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the §112, first paragraph rejection are respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

No art rejections are presently lodged against the pending claims.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that the claims patentably define the present invention over the cited art.

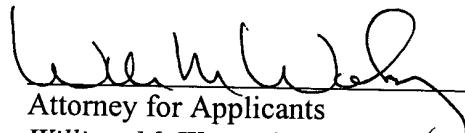
Conclusion

Applicants believe the present Amendment is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Office Action and submit that the present application is in allowable form. Favorable reconsideration of the claims and early passage to issue of the application are earnestly solicited.

If there is any reason precluding the allowance of the application, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact Applicants' undersigned representative.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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